

# 'A Good Deal of Disorder' or The Anarchists & Anti-Fascism In The UK

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## **ABSTRACT:**

This article opens with a press report of a particularly violent action involving anarchists at an anti-fascist action in the USA, shows how it was inaccurately perceived by media and law professionals, and how this indicates a universal lack of understanding about anarchists and militant anti-fascism. We then focus on the UK to see how anarchists prioritise anti-fascism and show their historical connections with militant groups like Anti-Fascist Action (AFA), No Platform and Antifa from the 1980s through to the early 2000s, and their current support for the militant Anti-Fascist Network.

Despite a respectable tradition of physically confronting fascists from the 1930s to the 1960s, the contemporary Communist Party factions have little to do with physical force anti-fascism. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) organised the hugely successful Rock Against Racism/Anti-Nazi League in 1978 that harnessed the energy of punks and brought them into the broader political struggle. The SWP also formed self-defence squads to protect their activities and supplied a model for effective intelligence gathering and physical confrontation that is still used by anti-fascists today. The SWP now delegate their anti-fascist resources to the large, national UAF whose relationship with anarchists and other militants has been fractious.

*Searchlight* magazine also excelled in effective intelligence gathering, exposing fascists from the mid-1970s onwards, and were originally part of AFA but as we shall see, they were damaged by falsely smearing anarchists and by their relationship with state operatives; their revisionist tracts have also tried to airbrush militant socialists and anarchists out of recent anti-fascist history. Searchlight have now been superseded by the more vigorous Hope Not Hate campaign who split away from them and organise a broad front against the far right. Finally, we look at the mainly anarchist initiative of Anti-Fascist Network (AFN), their relationships with other anti-fascists, and how they are now the most prominent militant opposition

to the far right in the UK, before drawing some conclusions on the current, global state of right wing politics and what anarchists could be doing about it.

**Keywords:** *militant anti-fascism, Anarchists, anti-fascist network, class war*

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## AT LEAST 10 HURT AT CHAOTIC, BLOODY NEO-NAZI RALLY AT CAPITOL

At least five people were stabbed; more than 100 police officers responded

Injuries, violent acts reported on both sides of altercation

Protesters included left-wing anarchists, who clashed with skinheads

A protester against white supremacy members recalls the violence at the State Capitol on Sunday, June 26, 2016. Anti-Fascist and fascist groups clashed in several areas on the grounds of the State Capitol resulting in at least 10 people injured – five being stabbed – and the closing of surrounding streets as more than 100 police in riot gear raced to subdue the violence.<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

‘This time the anarchists have taken a much more aggressive stance to wreak havoc on the city’.<sup>2</sup> On 26 June, 2016, in Sacramento, California, there was a violent altercation during a counter-demonstration held by anarchists, black bloc militants, and liberal anti-fascists against a neo-Nazi gang which resulted in several people being stabbed and others hospitalised. There had been violence between the two sides previously but on this occasion the Sacramento police chief reported that ‘the anarchists have taken a much more aggressive stance to wreak havoc on the city’.<sup>3</sup> Others were critical of the police for allowing the violence to escalate: a member of a lawyer’s group monitoring the situation said it was a ‘free for all’ and that ‘the police didn’t step in really’<sup>4</sup> which a news report corroborated by claiming that ‘law enforcement did little to stop the violence’.<sup>5</sup> Members of the press were confronted by some protestors, probably anarchists, for filming activists, knowing that police use footage and images from mainstream and social media as evidence in court cases that can lead to heavy fines or imprisonment (which the presence of masked and anonymous black bloc militants would also imply).<sup>6</sup>

The reactions of the police chief, the lawyer’s group member and news media reveal latent misconceptions: the police underestimated the anarchists’ potential for organisation and their violent response to the presence of neo-Nazis on the street; the liberal lawyer overestimated the will of the police to keep provocative fascists in

check and diffuse an inflamed situation; and the news reporters were surprised that anarchists were not too keen on being photographed or appearing on TV the next day. Furthermore, that the mainstream press gang, who attended a large majority of potentially explosive demonstrations, thought they were exempt from repercussions for possibly incriminating anti-fascists is as ludicrous as their claim to be objective.

According to an American socialist website, fascist groups should not be confronted on the streets by 'anarchistic groups' because 'violent confrontations between small groups cannot address the fundamental social antagonisms in capitalist society and ultimately play into the hands of the state'.<sup>7</sup> It failed to explain how passively letting neo-Nazis demonstrate in local communities can address these 'fundamental social antagonisms'.

These are universal misconceptions, as common in the USA as in the UK: the fact that anarchists use violence to meet violence automatically alienates reformists and liberals, neither of whom are likely to physically oppose fascists, and who will seek police protection, while hoping for a positive representation in mainstream capitalist media whose presence is often guaranteed during these mobilisations.

No matter what country or continent, anarchists ideologically oppose any reliance on the police to keep fascism in check and 'by any means necessary' is often employed to stop neo-Nazi encroaching on their communities. Anarchist collusion with liberals and reformists can be frustrating or fractious; and the hope of the mainstream press writing anything supportive or sympathetic about militant anti-fascism is deemed pointless.

This article makes a short comparative study between UK anarchist groups and their relative emphasis on anti-fascist activities, and the role anti-fascism plays within the UK far left. Historically, relations between UK anarchists and the far left have been shaky and we will look at the contemporary activities of 'official' anti-fascist groups such as *Searchlight*, Unite Against Fascism (UAF), and Hope Not Hate (HnH) before looking at the anarchist initiative, Anti-Fascist Network (AFN), then make some concluding remarks on the changing role of the far right, both on the street and the parliamentary level, and what anarchists can do about it.

## **ANARCHIST ANTI-FASCISM IN THE UK**

Different anarchists will focus on fascist provocation differently, especially in relation to political violence, and although every anarchist has cause to worry about increased fascist activity within or against their communities and workplaces, their response will vary. All anarchists reject hierarchical structures of power, exploitation of one by another, inequality in all its forms, and the militarism

and nationalism of totalitarian systems, as well as the various forms of Western liberalism and ‘parliamentary democracy’, but the manifestos of individual anarchist organisations in the UK itemise their priorities and illustrate their position regarding the political struggle against the far right. The most active anarchist groups are Solidarity Federation (SolFed), the Anarchist Federation (AFED), and ‘the working class action group’ Class War’.<sup>8</sup>

SolFed are anarcho-syndicalists affiliated to the International Workers Association (IWA) and previously known as Direct Action Movement (DAM) who played a key part in the formation and promotion of the militant Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) from 1985 to the late 1990s. On their website, SolFed reposted the Anti-Fascist Network (AFN) publicity for the 2016 AFN conference<sup>9</sup> and a link to the December, 2009 issue of *Direct Action* magazine that featured a cover story on the BNP.

A former member of London DAM produced one of the first accounts of AFA’s militant style of anti-fascism called ‘Bash The Fash’ (2001) under the pseudonym ‘K. Bullstreet’ which also had a list of ‘Survival Rules’ that included advice like ‘Never talk to the police’, ‘do one serious thing then get right away’, and ‘Keep yourself fit and sober’ (K. Bullstreet, 2001, 26). DAM, along with Northern Class War and other anarchist groups, were very much involved in AFA’s Northern Network that covered Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and other main towns and cities. In the 1980s, Liverpool DAM organised with other anarchists around the Mutual Aid Centre, a large squat in the middle of the city,<sup>10</sup> and later, an ex-member of Liverpool AFA produced a pamphlet entitled ‘Anti-Fascist Action – An Anarchist Perspective’ which gives an idea about structure and culture of the Northern anti-fascist militants. It says that Red Action were strongest in London and Manchester (they were also strong in Glasgow) whereas the Northern Network was ‘mainly organised by anarchists – sometimes in the DAM, sometimes not’ and that ‘apart from the regional groups of the DAM and Class War, there were also the Northern Anarchist Network’ and that ‘there were overlaps between different anarchist and activist scenes (Liverpool AFA, 2007, 6). SolFed’s current manifesto rejects ‘the state collaborationist strategy of groups such as Unite Against Fascism in favour of a class struggle approach to fighting the scourge of street-based racism and/or neo-fascism’ and SolFed will only ‘carry out anti-fascist activity with others through specifically class-struggle anti-fascist groups’<sup>11</sup> such as Anti-Fascist Network.

The Anarchist Federation (AFed) were originally the Anarchist-Communist Federation (ACF) and their website gives a class based analysis of racism as part of a system of oppression supporting ‘working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism’ and rejecting ‘all forms of

nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class'.<sup>12</sup>

AFed published their online report about the disastrous attempt in 2015 by neo-Nazis to march through Liverpool,<sup>13</sup> linked to the AFN's article on the same<sup>14</sup> and also published a booklet *Against Nationalism* (2009) which puts the origins of nationalism into a broad historical context and analyses its role as a form of imperialism.<sup>15</sup>

Class War, the 'working class action group', have always been about provocation and their publicity generating activities first appealed to many activists and disenfranchised punks from the Anarcho-punk scene in the 1980s. At its peak, the Class War newspaper, *Britain's Unruliest Tabloid*, was the most popular anarchist publication in the UK with 15-20,000 copies being sold at anarchist meetings, demonstrations, and gigs. Like Solfed and AFed, Class War advance a class based analysis of socio-political problems like racism. Class War joined Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) at its inception in 1985 and despite attempts by the state influenced Searchlight organisation to smear them as we shall see presently (Birchall, 2010, 113-115) continued to battle fascism on the streets of the UK throughout the '80s and '90s.

In 2006, two of Class War's principal organisers published very different accounts of their respective political histories. *Anti-Fascist* by Martin Lux is a bruising account of violent anti-fascism through the 1970s and also informally introduced some of the SWP militants who went on to form AFA. Lux describes how he became disillusioned by the left and its reluctance to confront the far right and 'within anarchist circles too, I found myself alone in urging the necessity of street level confrontation with fascists and racists' (Lux, 2006, 29). Throughout the book, Lux remains highly critical of 1970s anarchist pacifists and his most 'vociferous critics': the 'self-styled 'non-violent,' non-sexist anarchists' and their reluctance to organise against the ascendant National Front' (ibid., 36). In comparison, *Bash The Rich* by Ian Bone is an account of life before and beyond Class War which ignores the group's role in AFA, the attempt by Searchlight to smear members as fascists, and any other anti-fascist activity that Class War were involved in, such as the counter-demonstration against the far right in Liverpool in 1986 or numerous incidents in London and elsewhere (Bone, 2006). In 2013, Class War returned to the streets and occasional headlines and currently their website features articles on Rojava, Alt. Right and Anti-Fascist Network's 'How To Set Up An Anti-Fascist Group'.<sup>16</sup>

## LEFTIST ANTI-FASCISM

In 2017, relations between UK anarchists and the far left regarding anti-fascism are limited, although informal and personal relationships will inevitably exist locally

across political lines. Left wing groups, like anarchists, have always been concerned by racist and fascist activity but the style of their concern and the position it has on their political agendas varies from group to group.

The Communist Party of Britain (CPB) publish the daily *Morning Star* which covers the global anti-fascist struggle with recent articles on Edinburgh, London, Portugal and Ukraine.<sup>17</sup> The New Communist Party of Britain (NCPB) publish *The New Worker* every week and its 16/6/17 edition had a full report on the English Defence League *debacle* in Manchester the week before. The Communist Party of Great Britain Provisional Central Committee (CPGB-PCC) claim that ‘Communists are champions of the oppressed ... combating racism and chauvinism’<sup>18</sup> and the Stalinist Communist Party of Great Britain Marxist-Leninist (CPGB-ML) tell us that racism is a problem that will ‘never be solved while capitalism remains’.<sup>19</sup> It is unlikely that anarchists would approach any group who cherish the Soviet Union and North Korea, even if they could differentiate between the initials.

The Revolutionary Communist Group’s newspaper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* says the ‘RCG fights against racism and fascism in all its forms’<sup>20</sup> although what they mean by ‘fight’ and what anarchists mean by it will no doubt be different. However, in September, 2016, three supporters of the tiny Scottish Defence League (SDL) began harassing an RCG paper sale and, after a struggle, an RCG member managed to put one of them on the pavement before the SDL fled the scene.<sup>21</sup> Their website features updated reports on anti-fascist activity and campaigns against the detention migrants.

The Socialist Party fight ‘for the right to asylum’ and say ‘No to racist immigration laws’<sup>22</sup> and also used to be known as Militant whose anti-fascist squad, ‘the Away Team,’ were accused of fomenting violence during the Welling demonstration against the BNP in 1994 (M. Testa, 2015, 238-240).<sup>23</sup> *The Socialist* newspaper regularly covers anti-fascist demonstrations<sup>24</sup> and their website keeps busy with regular reports on anti-fascist and anti-racist activity in Liverpool, London and Manchester.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) were a dynamic organisation who brought many punks, musicians and militants into the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) and Rock Against Racism (RAR), many of whom went on to actively support the Miners strike in 1984-85 and protest against the Poll Tax. By 2017, the SWP had lost much credibility following a poorly dealt with rape scandal.<sup>25</sup> In 1977, the SWP formed the militant squads to prevent the National Front (NF) and British Movement (BM) from attacking their meetings and paper sales. These quickly went from a defensive to an offensive position, closing down far-right activity at street level. The increasing autonomy of the squads worried the SWP Central Committee who ordered their disbandment and then expelled several

of the main activists for spurious reasons (Renton, 2006, 169-173) although the 'squadists' quickly recovered their momentum and formed Red Action who initiated Anti-Fascist Action, the highly successful militant organisation that included a large percentage of anarchists (Hann and Tilzey, 2003, 15-21, Birchall, 2010, 45-70).

Stand-Up To Racism, formed in 2016 with support from MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbot,<sup>26</sup> organise days of action and events on issues around migration, racist activity and austerity politics. They have a 'soft left' appeal, organise amongst trade unions and students, and have been active in Calais working with stranded migrants.<sup>27</sup>

Unite Against Fascism (UAF) are the most visible anti-fascist organisation in the UK and have been for well over a decade. The SWP wound down their Anti-Nazi League #2 (ANL#2) which had operated from 1992-2003, then merged it with UAF along with other anti-racist organisations and political figures.<sup>28</sup> UAF started as a broad front coalition in 2003 that was supported by the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the Unite and Unison unions, and the Love Music, Hate Racism campaign that was set up in 2002.<sup>29</sup> UAF are supported by over twenty unions and their signatories include dozens of MPs, including David Cameron, journalists and musicians.<sup>30</sup> The UAF organised against the British National Party (BNP) who enjoyed some success at the ballot box in the early 2000s, having withdrawn from street confrontations after facing years of militant anti-fascist pressure.<sup>31</sup> The BNP, emulating the Euro-fascism of the Front National in France and Jorg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, accumulated local council seats, gaining 5.3 per cent of the votes for the London Assembly in 2008, and eventually gaining two MEP seats in 2009.<sup>32</sup> These political advances in popularity were damaged by leader Nick Griffin's disastrous appearance on *Question Time*, the BBC's political panel show, when he was uncomfortably rebuffed by panellists, audience members and a considerable presence of UAF and other anti-fascists outside the BBC building.<sup>33</sup>

The UAF were the only active and organised anti-fascist group big enough to respond to the sudden rise of the English Defence League (EDL) in late 2009-10 following the decline of the BNP, and could also draw on resources from sponsors and the SWP and for this should be acknowledged.<sup>34</sup> But relations between UAF and anarchists have been less than unhelpful: at an anti-EDL demo in Manchester, 2009 UAF/SWP started pointing out militants to police for arrest or removal.<sup>35</sup>

The tactics of the UAF and those of the anarchists/black bloc are radically different:<sup>36</sup> UAF will seek permission from local authorities to stage a counter-demonstration or march which means that police can contain them to prevent confrontations with the far right<sup>37</sup> turning the UAF demonstrations into static protests whereas other militants can operate more freely.<sup>38</sup>

The UAF often chant slogans like ‘Nazi Scum! Off Our Streets!’ although many EDL supporters were not neo-Nazis but violent hooligans, ultra-nationalists and racists, and clearing the far right off ‘our streets’ is not something easily done from behind police lines. The UAF mouth aggressive rhetoric about ‘smashing fascism’ off the streets yet refuse to physically engage fascists: in September, 2010, the SWP cancelled an anti-EDL meeting in Newcastle following right wing threats, rather than putting out a call out for local anti-fascists to defend it. The EDL turned up anyway and attacked door staff in a futile gesture that eventually saw six supporters jailed.<sup>39</sup> This is just one example where aggressive rhetoric and willingness to confront the far right have been at odds with each other. The EDL had formed for this, attacking George Galloway’s meetings in Manchester<sup>40</sup> and Oldham<sup>41</sup> where security was poor and the EDL, after their usual posturing and abuse, ended up with an embarrassing victory. It is up to every single anti-fascist to decide what tactics they choose and who they side with as, after all, not every anarchist is either willing or capable of engaging in violence. But self-defence measures should always be prioritised to avoid such easy opportunism by the far right.

*Searchlight* magazine first appeared in 1975, written by several anti-fascists, some of whom had been active since the early 1960s in the militant anti-fascist 62 Group, (Silver, 2002, 15-23). They published leaked information from and about the far right, exposed holocaust deniers like David Irving<sup>42</sup> as well as the violent Combat 18 gang (Lowles, 2001) – though some anti-fascists thought that C18 were a state managed set-up<sup>43</sup> and that their efficacy had been overstated as they never scored a decisive victory over the militant anti-fascists they were meant to oppose (Birchall, 2010, 336-353, M. Testa, 2015, 259-266). *Searchlight* cultivated valuable informants and defectors in fascist organisations, like Ray Hill (Hill & Bell, 1988) and Matthew Collins, now working with Hope Not Hate (Collins, 2011) and their ability to gather intelligence and (selectively) distribute it, meant they were welcomed into Anti-Fascist Action #1 in 1985 until they tried to force the suspension of Class War by claiming they had ‘fostered links with the NF’, although proof was hardly forthcoming (Birchall, 2010, 113). The attempt to smear Class War continued in two articles in *The Guardian* newspaper but an internal AFA inquiry found no evidence and reported that ‘the sum total of material from *Searchlight* to the enquiry was nil’ (ibid., 114). This hardly helped relations between the anarchists and *Searchlight* and AFA #2, now without the original liberal and reformist elements, de-escalated relations with *Searchlight* in the early 1990s when their links with security services became too apparent and risky.<sup>44</sup> *Searchlight*’s long standing relationship with the police and state forces is now well-known and militants avoid them.<sup>45</sup>

To say *Searchlight*’s publications are revisionist is something of an under-



statement: Red Action pointed out that Searchlight had blanked AFA's role in confronting fascists throughout the 1980s and 1990s in their book *White Noise* (1998)<sup>46</sup> and Searchlight's *From Cable Street to Oldham: 70 Years Of Community Resistance*, does not mention AFA once despite the relationship that lasted for several years (Lowles, 2007). Unlike Stalinists, Searchlight's books ignore people in history rather than airbrushing them *après* execution.<sup>47</sup> In the analogue years of the 1980s and early 1990s, Searchlight's magazine practically controlled the distribution of information on fascist activity and was essential reading for anti-fascists but now, in the twenty-first century, anarchist bloggers and hackers gather and distribute information through social media or via websites like EDL News or Hope Not Hate who split from Searchlight in 2011.<sup>48</sup>

Hope Not Hate (HnH) run a well-constructed website,<sup>49</sup> produce a regular journal,<sup>50</sup> and also run educational community campaigns against racism, fascism and right wing nationalists like UKIP.<sup>51</sup> They continue to cultivate bitter informants with many articles based on information from disgruntled fascists, particularly 'The Insider' blog which is spiced with leaked details, ridicule and satire.<sup>52</sup> HnH monitor nearly all UK far-right activity but remain non-confrontational, preferring to document and distribute information, and although they are not aligned to any political party or organisation they have a fairly obvious bias towards the Labour party given their signature members.<sup>53</sup> The Hope Not Hate website is popular and their intelligence up to date with many journalists and bloggers using it as a primary source although anarchists remain wary, given their previous history with Searchlight.

## **ANTI-FASCIST NETWORK**

The Anti-Fascist Network is a mainly anarchist initiative formed in response to the English Defence League and in lieu of any organised physical force opposition.<sup>54</sup> In 2009 there was no militant anti-fascist initiative in place to cope with the increasingly large EDL marches, and although there had been smaller anarchist oriented organisations like No Platform and Antifa who operated in the early 2000s, between the demise of AFA and the start of AFN, No Platform had dissolved several years earlier whilst their successor Antifa had been temporarily incapacitated by a court case that ended with several members receiving prison sentences (M. Testa, 2015, 295-302). Although there was no national infrastructure, informal contact between anarchists in places like Brighton, London and Manchester, helped facilitate the growth of AFN (Hann, 2011, 359-371) and it can now draw support on militants around the UK: both SolFed<sup>55</sup> and Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA)<sup>56</sup> have officially declared their support. The AFN website publishes reports

on counter-demonstrations<sup>57</sup> as well as information on conferences<sup>58</sup> and dispenses with any ambiguity, stating that

The Anti-Fascist Network is a network of independent and grassroots groups working together against the rise of racism and fascism in our communities ... The aim of the network is to support these local actions and to join together to counter regional and national far right events, ensuring maximum numbers on the streets as well as sharing resources and providing legal support ... The Anti-Fascist Network is non-hierarchical, will never work with the police and is not affiliated to any political party.<sup>59</sup>

Brighton Anti-Fascists are one of the motivating factors in AFN and published *A Year On The Streets* (2013) which documents anarchist anti-fascist actions against the EDL around the UK, especially against their splinter faction March For England and their annual forays into Brighton itself that have been continuously opposed by thousands (Brighton AFN, 2013).<sup>60</sup> The booklet is clear about the anti-fascist left and states that anarchists should 'have unity with the UAF and other left anti-fascist organisations if possible, but equally we can't rely on left groups to do all the big overt public organising so that anarchists and autonomous anti-fascists can then tail-end and lurk around the fringes of their mobilisations' (ibid.).

Anarchists within the AFN will have jettisoned any faith in a just or equitable state and mobilise to confront and defeat the far right at street level but, when far right parties start seeking the ballot and gain increasing popularity, what then? In the early 1990s, AFA discovered that when the BNP withdrew from *al fresco* confrontations at street level and started seeking electoral respectability anarchists in particular become tactically muted.<sup>61</sup>

## CONCLUSION

2017 started badly for the far right in the UK as their street presence had been effectively neutralised through a concerted effort by the AFN and UAF to outnumber and outmanoeuvre them while directing the anti-fascist narrative via increasingly important social media: Facebook, Youtube, discussion forums, and anti-fascist websites, that are also effectively used by Hope Not Hate and UAF along with their mainstream media links. A further debilitating aspect has been the failure of fascist groupuscules to unify, undermined by bitter infighting and schisms in the English Defence League, the National Front and the moribund British National Party.<sup>62</sup> In 2016, the neo-Nazi grouplet National Action was

proscribed by the state,<sup>63</sup> many fascists were jailed for rioting in Dover, as were far right provocateurs for hurling bacon at mosques<sup>64</sup> and online racial abuse.<sup>65</sup> Anarchists cannot claim any credit for the results of state action nor can they particularly applaud it, and they cannot rely on the far right to periodically implode, frequent though that may be.

On June 11, 2017, three weeks after the Ariana Grande bombing, the EDL 'LGBT Division' organised a demonstration under the name 'Gays Against Shariah' in Manchester and as their previous outing in Stockton, in the North East of the UK, had gathered a mere half dozen or so<sup>66</sup> and the EDL's previous outing in Liverpool had been another embarrassing failure,<sup>67</sup> militant anti-fascists, UAF, and the local LGBT community were not overtly apprehensive.

However, Tommy Robinson had supplanted the organisers<sup>68</sup> and managed to attract over 1,000 fascists, ultra-nationalists and neo-Nazis who managed to break out of the police cordon and abuse or assault counter-demonstrators and passers-by<sup>69</sup> whilst Robinson used the press coverage to launch his UK Against Hate (an appropriation of UKIP and Hope Not Hate).<sup>70</sup> Elated by their success, the EDL began actively promoting their next demo in London on June 24, 2017, the day before Robinson's own UK Against Hate demo on the 25th, but Robinson decided to cancel saying it was 'too soon'.<sup>71</sup> Shortly after midnight on 19 June, 2017, a week after the EDL demo in Manchester, Darren Osborne drove a van into worshipers at the Finsbury Park mosque in North London, killing one person and injuring several others, and screaming he wanted to 'kill all Muslims'. Robinson appeared on TV the next day claiming that it was 'a revenge attack' for the attacks on Westminster, Borough Market and Manchester,<sup>72</sup> further legitimised by the migration crisis.

Anarchists and other militants will need to reassess their commitment to anti-fascism as racist politicians and parties require new strategies and tactics to combat them but, also, as ever, the role of anarchists remains a practical one: to continue exposing and publicising the fascist tendencies of far right parties; to organise solidarity action with migrants in their communities; and to maintain a concerted physical opposition to the far right as and when necessary.

UK anarchists can look to Greek anarchist/anti-fascists and their broad programme of practical solidarity with migrants, as documented in the film *Burning From The Inside*.<sup>73</sup> They have organised temporary lodging for recent arrivals<sup>74</sup> and later run language classes for migrants; they have distributed food, clothing and household essentials; helped with legal advice and information on health services, benefits and work; as well as organising solidarity activities and social events to prevent migrants becoming isolated and vulnerable within the community.

This kind of practical action is simultaneously effective and inclusive and something that UK anarchists can work towards in 2017.

**M. Testa** is the author of *Militant Anti-Fascism: 100 Years Of Resistance* (AK Press, 2015), which the *Morning Star* newspaper described as ‘a potent primer on Europe’s anti-fascist struggle’ and has also written for the anarchist magazine *Freedom*. He is better known as the anti-fascist blogger ‘Malatesta’ who has analysed the changing fortunes of the British far right since 2009, particularly the decline of the British National Party and the rapid rise and collapse of the English Defence League.

## NOTES

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